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Difference Between Parents Modeling During Children's Social Problem Solving

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARENTS MODELING DURING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING

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Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by Sheryl Markulin

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Abstract

Social problem solving is a vital aspect in children's social development. Parents play a role in influencing their children's social problem solving styles through modeling. Mothers and fathers model different social problem solving styles; this may be explained by the "maternal gatekeeping theory." This is a situation in which the mother's beliefs about the father inhibit his involvement. If there are differences in the ways in which mothers and fathers model social problem solving skills, these may influence their children's social development in a negative or positive manner. This study investigated how mothers impact the fathers in joint problem solving with their child. It was predicted that: 1) Fathers' behaviors will change when they interact with their children alone as compared with the times when they interact with their children in the presence of their spouses. 2) The degree to which fathers' behaviors change will be related to the degree to which mothers engage in gatekeeping behaviors. 3) The degree to which fathers' behaviors change will be related to the mothers' beliefs about the competencies of the fathers. 4) The more frequently that mothers believe that fathers are competent, the less likely will they be to engage in gatekeeping behaviors. The results indicated that fathers interact differently in the presence of mothers while engaging in social problem solving tasks and that mothers engage in gatekeeping behaviors. Fathers, when in the presence of mothers, shifted their problem orientations, not problem solving styles. Contrary to the hypothesized expectation and previous research, mothers did not engage in less gatekeeping if they perceived fathers as being competent.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Children's acquisition of competent and adaptive social problem solving skills is vital to the social developmental process (Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Bandura, 1977). Individual differences in children's social problem solving skills have been related to such things as social popularity (Richard & Dodge, 1982) but also to aggressive behavior (Richard & Dodge, 1982). The origin of these differences, however, is not well understood. Parents, as critical actors in the socialization of their children, may well influence their social learning through modeling of competent (and sometimes incompetent) problem solving strategies (Bandura & McDonald, 1963). That is, children learn social problem solving skills by watching adults who engage in problem solving activities (Radziszewska & Rogoff, 1991).

The ways in which mothers engage in social problem solving with their children and the ways in which fathers engage in this type of problem solving may be quite different. For example, mothers versus fathers may (1) model different social problem solving styles with their children (Elias, Ubriaco, & Gray, 1985; Fagot & Gauvin, 1997; Gauvin, Fagot, Leve, & Kavanagh, 2002) or (2) one parent may engage in social problem solving to a greater or lesser extent than the other parent. The source of these differences is not entirely clear. Differences in early socialization of boys versus girls may impact individuals as they become parents. In addition, the mother-father relationship may impact how each interacts with their child. For instance, "maternal gatekeeping theory"

(Allen & Hawkins, 1999) may help to explain the reason why fathers' involvement (or lack of) in social problem solving is inhibited. The mother's beliefs about the father's competence influence the father's involvement (McBride et al., 2005). If the mother believes that the father is incompetent, and she believes that she is more competent, she may interject herself when the father attempts to take a more prominent role. He may then withdraw from attempts to interact with his child and, over time, he may stop trying altogether. Such a scenario would limit the father's influence in the socialization of appropriate social problem solving for the child simply because there are fewer opportunities for him to model the styles involved in the problem solving process (McBride et al., 2005).

Purpose of the Study

Primary Purpose: Fathers' Problem Solving With Versus Without Mothers

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the mother's presence on the father's involvement in joint problem solving activities with their child. Two aspects of fathers' involvement will be examined: (1) the *type* of problem solving orientation they adopt in the presence of the mothers versus in the absence of the mothers (e.g., are there changes in attributions or in solutions provided?), and (2) the *degree* to which they actively engage in the problem solving process when alone with their child rather than a time when the mother is also present (e.g., is there a change in frequency of suggesting or volunteering reasons or solutions to the presented problems?). That is, are fathers more likely to be actively engaged in facilitating children's social problem solving when they are alone versus at times when mothers are present? Also, are there shifts in the styles by

which fathers model child problem solving when alone versus at times when mothers are present?

Secondary Purpose I: Are Mothers Engaging in Gatekeeping Behaviors?

It is hypothesized that if there are observed shifts in the father's behavior when alone versus the times when the mother is present, that this may be an indication that she is impacting him by engaging in "Gatekeeping Behaviors." That is, she may be actively encouraging him or discouraging him whenever he attempts to become involved in the process. For example, when he offers a reason why something happened, she may respond by saying, "No, that's not it." This type of response may extinguish his involvement, shutting him down and decreasing the likelihood that he will subsequently offer a suggestion.

Secondary Purpose II: Beliefs About Fathers Competence

There are likely multiple reasons why a mother might engage in Gatekeeping Behaviors. One possible explanation is her belief that he is not competent (or not as competent as she is) in his abilities. Alternatively, it may be the father who believes that he is not as competent as the mother. He may simply abdicate his involvement without the presence of Gatekeeping behaviors.

Overview of the Proposed Study

In an attempt to examine these three purposes, the current study will compare or contrast father-child joint problem solving activities versus father-mother-child joint problem solving activities. Fathers' behaviors (type and degree of involvement in the problem solving process) will be compared or contrasted when he is alone with his child versus times when he is present with the mother and his child. It is hypothesized that he

will not shift his type of problem solving orientation but that he will decrease his involvement in the process and shift his problem solving style. If these shifts are observed, it is further hypothesized that this will be related to (1) mother's expression of Gatekeeping Behaviors, (2) mother's beliefs about father's competence, and (3) father's beliefs about his own competence.

Blueprint of the Literature Review

Children need their parents to provide modeling for social problem solving skills. In fact, children's social problem solving skills improve when parents provide modeling (Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Bandura, 1977; Elias et al., 1985). However, mothers and fathers interact differently during a problem solving task with their children. Research has also shown a pattern indicating that mothers having a greater influence than fathers in modeling social problem solving skills and in Attributional Styles (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Garber & Flynn, 2001; Jaffee & D'Zurilla, 2003; Pakaslahti, Spoof, Asplund-Peltola, & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 1998; Seligman, Kaslow, Alloy, Peterson, Tanenbaum, & Abramson, 1984; Stark, Schmidt, & Joiner, 1996; Vuchinich & Angelelli, 1995). These differences between parents' problem solving skills and Attributional Styles may be explained by a maternal gatekeeping theory (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al. 2005; Minuchin, 1974).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Social Problem Solving

Social problem solving, which refers to resolving a problem within the natural environment (D'Zurilla, Nezu, & Maydeu-Olivares, 2004; D'Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971), involves a cognitive behavioral process in which a family identifies an effective solution to an everyday problem. The goal of social problem solving entails an effortful application not only to make a situation better but also to decrease the emotional difficulty of the situation. The problem is defined as a real life problem with obstacles that may affect families' daily functioning. The solution is a process that involves an effective cognitive or behavioral response that changes the problem, resulting in positive outcomes and decreasing negative outcomes. Within the social problem solving model, there are four necessary skills: (a) orientation to the problem, (b) producing solutions to the problem, (c) making a decision, and (d) carrying out a solution (D'Zurilla et al., 2004; D'Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971).

The process of gaining solutions depends on the outcomes. An effective solution leads to positive outcomes and lessens the negative outcomes. These outcomes from effective solutions depend on two aspects: problem orientation and problem solving style (Nezu, 2004). The problem orientation is the cognitive-emotional schema that represents how one successfully copes with the problem. The problem solving style is the process by which one perceives his or her ability to control and solve the problem.

Problem orientation has two components, a positive orientation or a negative orientation (Nezu, 2004). A positive orientation strengthens later problem solving

attempts by increasing one's motivation and positive affect when faced with a problem. One needs to embrace four cognitive skills in a positive orientation. These skills are: 1) noticing successful problem solving as involving effort and time; 2) showing the self-efficacy and self-control to solve problems; 3) perceiving the problem as solvable, and 4) viewing the problem as a challenge. Negative orientation can lead to thwarting later problem solving skills and decreasing one's motivation to solve problems. A negative orientation occurs when: 1) the problem is perceived as frustrating; 2) there is hesitation in the ability to solve the problem; 3) the problem is seen as threatening, and 4) the problem is viewed as unsolvable (Nezu, 2004).

Problem solving style is adaptive or maladaptive. An adaptive problem solving style is a rational decision making process that skillfully plans an adaptive coping response. Rational decision making reflects the aforementioned skills explained in the problem solving model: orientation to the problem, production of solutions, decision making, and implementation of a solution (D'Zurilla et al., 2004; Nezu, 2004; D'Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971). The maladaptive problem solving consists of an impulsive and careless style or an avoidant style. The impulsive or careless style is rushed, resulting in poorly planned solutions. An avoidant style occurs when one is passive or dependent on others when one is problem solving. Both result in ineffective problem resolutions or in an increase in the difficulty of the problem (Nezu, 2004).

Social Problem Solving related to Attributional Styles

Problem solving is related to one's Attributional Style, which plays an important role in social problem solving because it is a cognitive process that explains positive and negative causes for events. These explanatory causes may impact parents' problem

solving orientation and skills. For instance, a negative Attributional Style may be associated with a negative problem solving orientation. This may result in modeling the possibility that the problem is too frustrating, is threatening or is perceived as unsolvable.

Research has shown that attributions take part in shaping behaviors. For instance, according to the Abramson et al., (1978) cognitive model of depression, known as the Attributional reformulation of the learned helplessness model, individuals have different Attributional Styles that are consistent over time and over events. The authors found that individuals who attribute negative events to internal, stable, and global causes were more susceptible to depression. They blame themselves for the event (internal), and they view the event as being consistent all of the time (stable), and as being generalized across situations (global). The individuals who attributed external, unstable and specific causes to events were not at risk for depression. However, the impact of Attributional Styles may not only be a difference that reflects in individuals who present with depressive symptoms, but Attributional Styles may also play a role in one's problem solving orientation and style.

Research exploring depressive symptoms, not parental problem solving, supports the relationship between problem solving orientation and Attributional Style. For instance, Spence, Sheffield, and Donavan (2002) examined 733 adolescents, ages 12 to 14 years from a community sample. They wanted to determine if depression was related to an interaction between cognitive causes such as Attributional Style and negative problem solving orientation and life stressors. The measures used were the Beck Depression Inventory, the Social Problem Solving Inventory-Revised, and the Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire-Revised. The results suggested that adolescents with

higher depression scores were associated with more life stressors, with a pessimistic Attributional Style and with a negative problem solving orientation. They also found gender differences within this study. The adolescent females reported higher scores of depressive symptoms and higher scores on negative problem solving orientation.

Within the Spence et al., (2002) study, they found that stress correlated with a pessimistic Attributional Style and negative problem solving orientation. The authors did not explain those elements that constitute a pessimistic Attributional Style. It may have been more helpful for the authors to include the Attributional Style, such as internal versus external, stable versus unstable, and specific versus global that was associated with negative problem solving orientation.

The Importance of Parental Influences

Children's cognitions and behaviors are increased when they learn effective social problem solving skills through instrumental learning, through guidance from others and through modeling (Bandura, 1977). Modeling is an important part of social learning (Bandura & McDonald, 1963). The role of parents promotes modeling to guide their child's social problem solving skills. There is a wealth of research that suggests how parents model social problem solving with their children.

Earlier studies by Elias et al., (1985) examined how the belief systems and teaching styles of parents provided modeling to their children's social problem solving and school adjustment. Using a case study, they observed four families. The four families were administered the Family Experience Game to examine their responses to problematic social situations. Interestingly, they found that parental teaching strategies for social problem solving were related to positive school adjustment. They also found that in the

children who had the poorest school adjustment also had parents who disagreed about this influence on their children's competence. The authors hypothesized that parental disagreements influence their children's social problem solving skills and may lead to their maladjustment.

Bandura and McDonald's (1963) earlier research lends support to the importance of modeling's effect on the child's social learning. The authors examined the effectiveness of modeling and reinforcement in changing children's moral judgment responses. They studied three groups of children. The first group observed adult models that had moral judgments against the group values and they received reinforcement to respond similarly. The second group observed models but received no reinforcement. The third group had no exposure to models but received reinforcements. They found that modeling was just as effective in changing moral judgments as were modeling and reinforcements. They concluded that children's moral judgments can change through modeling from adults. The use of modeling may shape the patterns of social behavior.

In order to improve their cognitive development, children need to learn social problem solving abilities from skilled adults. Earlier research examined the adult-child interaction on problem solving activities and found that adults have a positive influence on the child's social problem solving abilities if the child is not competent in the skill (Gauvain & Rogoff, 1989; Radziazweska & Rogoff, 1991). The collaboration with an adult on a social problem solving skill may be damaging for a child, however, when the child has the competence in the skill and the parent lacks the competence (Mondell & Tyler, 1981). However, when the parent and the child engage in problem solving activities, the child shows more efficient problem solving skills compared with children and peers engaged in

problem solving (Gauvain & Rogoff, 1989). Thus, parental influence is an important aspect in developing competence in their children's social problem solving abilities. Children demonstrate better social problem solving skills with adult collaboration involving skilled planning and guidance rather than situations in which children simply collaborate with peers (Radziszewska & Rogoff, 1991). These two studies demonstrate the importance of parental involvement in social problem solving skills to improve children's cognitive functioning.

Fagot and Gauvin (1997) examined 85 children who were seen at 18 months and then at 30 months. This longitudinal study examined these children and their mothers relative to the relationship between social and cognitive competency and their parenting styles. The mother rated the child's temperament and behavior at 18 months. Then the authors observed the maternal guidance and support during problem-solving activities when the child was 30 months. They found that, over time, the mothers' guidance and views of their child's behavior had an impact on the child's problem solving abilities over time. They also found that less maternal guidance at an earlier age was related to the teacher's ratings of the child's having learning problems. The limits with Fagot and Gauvin's (1997) research is that they do not compare mother's and father's interactions, and therefore, the father's impact and guidance on their child's problem solving ability is not known.

Because the parents play an important role in their child's competence in social problem solving, it is helpful for the child if the parents show competence in social problem solving skills. For instance, in research by Mondell and Tyler (1981) 23 parents and children were studied to discover the association between parental psychosocial

competence and their interactions with their children during a problem solving task. This study measured self-efficacy, interpersonal trust, and coping style orientation to determine parental competence. Next the parent-child interaction was observed in order to rate the parents' problem solving skills. There were 12 parents grouped into the more competent group and 11 parents in the less competent group. The authors found that the more competent parents offered fewer commands, more problem solving strategies and more suggestions. The authors concluded that if parents are more competent they model competence in problem solving skills for their children. The only drawback with Mondell and Tyler's (1981) research is that they did not examine the differences between the mothers' and father's competence, specifically in problem solving styles, thus lacking a parental competence measure.

The Differences in Mothers and Fathers

There are gender differences in social problem solving. D'Zurilla, Maydeu-Olivares, and Kant (1998) found significant gender differences among diverse age groups in social problem solving. They examined age and gender differences using the Social Problem Solving Scale-Revised (SPSI-R) for 1,104 subjects divided into three different age samples. The age ranges were as follows: 17 to 20 was considered young adulthood; 40 to 55 was considered middle age and 60 to 80 was considered older age. The SPSI-R measures two scales, the problem orientation and the problem solving skills scale. Within these two scales, five categories are measured: positive problem solving, negative problem solving, rational problem solving, impulsivity or carelessness style, and avoidance style. The authors found that social problem solving skills increase from young adulthood to middle age and then decrease at an older age. The gender differences were

found in two of the categories, positive problem solving and negative problem solving. Across all of the age groups, the men scored higher than women on the positive problem orientation and lower than women on the negative problem orientation. The women in the middle age group, 40 to 55, scored higher on the positive problem orientation and lower on the avoidance problem orientation than men. Men in the middle age group scored higher on rational problem solving compared with young adults.

Parents interact differently during a mother-child and father-child dyad when engaging in a problem solving task. Gauvin et al., (2002) observed mothers and fathers interacting with their children. They examined 165 five year olds that were monitored while in dyads on a cognitive activity that was familiar and unfamiliar. They assessed how parents provided instructions to their children on tasks that were familiar and on novel tasks that they did not know how to solve. They also performed a posttest on the children to decide their performances based on the levels of instructions that their parents provided. They observed how the parents responded as their child gained experience on the tasks. They found that both mothers and fathers had similar instructive approaches and were equally responsive to their child changing the newly learned skill to a familiar task. The fathers, however, offered more strategies whether the child was familiar or was not familiar with the task. The mothers, on the other hand, offered more strategies and behavior directives to the children who were not familiar with problem solving activity. The children performed better on the posttest for problem solving when both of their parents provided several instructions, as opposed to the situations in which the parents provided fewer instructions. When observing the mother-child dyad, the authors found that when the mother used several instructions for the child, the child performed poorly

on the posttest. They also found a stronger association between the mothers' and the children's organization of the problem solving steps compared with the fathers and the children's organization. Overall, the joint activity of the parents appeared to increase the importance of modeling for social and cognitive development in problem solving.

The research from other populations shows how parental problem solving influences their children's problem solving ability with externalizing behaviors (Jaffee & D'Zurilla, 2003). The research concludes that children's problem solving ability significantly relates to the mother's problem solving ability rather than to the father's problem solving ability. There is a relationship among the mother and child's social problem solving in rational problem solving, avoidance style, and impulsivity style. Mothers play a greater role in modeling social problem solving for their children, whether it is negative or positive modeling (Jaffee & D'Zurilla, 2003).

Parental differences in social problem solving strategies may depend on their child's aggressive and nonaggressive behaviors. When the child exhibits aggressive behavior and the parents receive social pressures from outside the family, mothers become more involved by lecturing their children but fathers back off from their involvement (Pakaslahti et al., 1998). However, there are no differences in parental social problem solving with offering solutions and solving the problem themselves when the child displays aggressive behavior. The mothers and fathers offered no solutions for their aggressive children; instead, they offered advice. The mothers of the nonaggressive children offered more solutions. The fathers of nonaggressive children offer more problem solving strategies (Pakaslahti et al., 1998). Therefore, parental social problem solving styles correlate with their child's behavior. If the child displays aggressive

behavior the mother takes charge, becoming more supervisory, but the father becomes more passive in problem solving with the child. There may not be social problem solving differences between parents if the child does not display negative behavior.

Besides social problem solving styles, parents may model different types of Attributional Styles during social problem solving. Mothers model Attributional Styles more often than fathers (Garber & Flynn, 2001; Seligman et al., 1984). The means of how and why this occurs is not clear within the research. Most of the research examines the association between mothers' and children's attribution styles and depressive symptoms, not the fathers' styles and symptoms. However, there are some studies that examined how children learn Attributional Styles from their parents, including both mothers and fathers.

For instance, Seligman et al., (1984) found a significant relationship between mothers, but not fathers, Attributional Style for bad events with their children. More research evaluating the relationship between the parents' negative view of the self, the world, and future to their children' s negative view of the self, the world and future found a relationship between the mothers' cognitive triad and children's, but not the fathers (Stark, Schmidt, & Joiner 1996). These two studies confirm that Attributional Styles are similar between the mothers and children, but not necessarily between the fathers and children. Also, the authors credit the likenesses of the mother-child Attributional Styles based on an influence from depressive thinking styles.

Garber and Flynn (2001) found that general Attributional Styles were not associated between mothers and their children. Instead, they found that mothers with a negative Attributional Style toward the children's behaviors was similar to their children's

Attributional Style about their own behaviors. The parenting style that contributed to the children's Attributional Style was determined to be psychological control. They defined psychological control as the manner in which mothers influence their children's behavior by inducing shame, guilt, anxiety and withdrawal from love.

Therefore, it seems that mothers' negative Attributional Style and their parenting style have a greater impact on children, than do fathers' Attributional and parenting styles. Is it because mothers take charge during social problem solving, leaving a greater impact on their children? Or is it because the research focuses more often on mothers than on fathers because mothers decide the family plans? Most of the research which focuses on parents' Attributional Styles, focuses particularly on mothers who are depressed, and on the ways in which the mothers' Attributional Styles impact their children. The research is not clear about why mothers' Attributional Style is associated more often with their children's Attributional Style. The maternal gatekeeping theory may explain the reason behind this.

In contrast to the Maternal Gatekeeping theory, there is earlier research that has found an association between Attributional Style and parents' psychological well-being, not on the gender of the parents. Tiggemann, Winefield, Goldney, & Winefield, (1992), studied the relationships between Attributional Styles, the impacts from parenting rearing patterns and psychological well-being. They interviewed 111 men and 120 women who were approximately 19 years old. The Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) was used to measure their Attributions. The subjects were asked to recall how their mothers and fathers, separately, behaved toward them by rating their behaviors on a four point scale. The scores were sorted into three factors: rejecting, supportive or over involved.

Attributional Style and psychological well-being had a high correlation. Attributions for bad outcomes negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with depressed affect. In contrast, Attributional Style for good outcomes positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with depressed affect. Depressed affect and low self-esteem from both parents were found to result in less supportive, more rejecting and more over involved children. Most interestingly, they found that the subjects with both mothers and fathers who were supportive made more stable attributions for positive outcomes. The subjects who had only mothers who were supportive made fewer stable attributions for negative outcomes. Therefore, individuals who have low self-esteem and depressed affect make more internal, stable and global attributions for bad outcomes and make more external, stable and global attributions for positive outcomes.

Why Are There Parental Differences?

Parent's interaction during problem solving activities differs. The literature lends support to these differences. However, the differences between mothers and fathers are not clearly defined within the research. It seems that the mothers take charge and align with the child more often than the father during these problem solving activities (Gauvain et al., 2002; Jafee & D'Zurilla, 2003; Vuchinich & Angelelli, 2005). Therefore, a better understanding of the parental differences may be examined further by Maternal Gatekeeping behaviors which stem from structural family theory (Minuchin, 1974).

Social problem solving with the mother, father and child involves an interaction within the family system at different levels. This family system level interacts through a functional pattern (Minuchin, 1974). The functional patterns establish how, when and with whom to relate within the family, thus regulating the child's behavior. The

functional patterns are controlled by two subsystems within the family. The first subsystem entails the power hierarchy in the family, such as the hierarchy involving the parents and the child. This power hierarchy entails a function of gatekeeping behaviors deciding who and when to pass through the family boundaries. The second is the day-to-day expectations of the family members. The family functions are carried out by these two subsystems. The subsystems may entail the mother-father, the father-child, or the mother-child when carrying out the family roles. There are also certain boundaries within the subsystem that define the rules of the family functioning. When the mother-child coalition is formed within the subsystem, it creates enmeshed boundaries leading to a more marginal father involvement. The exclusion of the father and the enmeshment of the mother-child may lead to the child's difficulty in social problem solving skills (Minuchin, 1974).

When an imbalance of power occurs within the parental subsystem, sometimes the child is covertly forced to align with one of the parents (Minuchin, 1974). For instance, when there is a mother-son coalition and the boundary does not include the father, this creates a dysfunctional communication pattern (Vuchinich & Angelelli, 1995). When the family is experiencing stress, this dysfunctional communication pattern is modeled by the parent who set up the coalition with the child (Minuchin, 1974; Vuchinich & Angelelli, 1995). When the father is reacting negatively toward the mother, the mother will encourage the child to take sides against the father. This leads to poor modeling for the child's social problem solving skills (Vuchinich & Angelelli, 1995).

Vuchinich & Angelelli (1995) applied the social learning theory to examine the relationships between family coalitions and the effectiveness of social problem solving.

They investigated 40 family triads, mothers, fathers, and their sons. The average age of the male child was 9.7 years. The parents selected from an issues checklist containing a list of parent-child concerns that are common problems at home. They were videotaped for 10 minutes while solving the problem. They found that stronger mother-father coalitions were related to less effective problem solving, including tendencies for an antisocial son. The high mother-son coalitions were also related to poor problem solving and antisocial tendencies in their sons. In the families with effective problem solving abilities, both parents were less negative and the father was more positive. The mothers with a close coalition with fathers had more negative interactions with their sons. The fathers engaged in more negative interactions during problem solving in the high mother-son coalition. The sons had more prosocial tendencies in the high mother-son coalition and more antisocial tendencies in the high mother-father coalitions. The authors suggest that there are cognitive and emotional effects on children who are part of a coalition; these effects also occur in children when there is a coalition that is against them.

There needs to be a healthy balance between the mother-father coalition and parental power within the family to model and reinforce appropriate social problem solving skills. If there is not a healthy balance of power between the mother and father, the parent who displays a stronger coalition and exerts more power within the family may negatively influence the child's social problem solving style. The Gatekeeper in the family may have a greater influence setting up a coalition with the child, thus leading to a stronger influence in modeling social problem solving abilities. The research has identified the fact that mothers, more often than fathers, become the Gatekeeper; this is known as

Maternal Gatekeeping (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al., 2005).

Maternal Gatekeeping and Beliefs

A definition of Maternal Gatekeeping involves three parts. First, it is the reluctance to hand over the family responsibility to the father by setting rigid standards. Second, it involves the mother's ability to confirm her maternal identity. Last, it allows the mother to set different conceptions of the family roles (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Allen and Hawkins (1999) operationalized these three parts and found reliability that was confirmed through a factor analysis on a sample of 622 mothers. They used a random mailing list and sent out 1500 surveys to women who were married, who were dual income earners, and had at least one child living at home. They received 622 surveys in return. The concepts that were measured included the standards and responsibilities, differences in family roles, and family work. The findings showed that these three concepts positively correlated. They further investigated the validity of the gatekeeping measure by clustering variables into three levels of gatekeeping: gatekeeper, intermediate and collaborator. Interestingly, they found a gatekeeping group that was high in the three concepts: responsibility, defined family roles and work. The intermediate and collaborator gatekeeping group had similar means for all three concepts. This study lends empirical support for the influence of mothers inhibiting fathers' involvement with their children's caretaking.

Maternal Gatekeeping inhibits the fathers' ability to model for their children. There are two studies that confirm how maternal gatekeeping inhibits the fathers' involvement (DeLuccie, 1995; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al., 2005). Fagan and Barnett

(2003) examined the relationship between gatekeeping and the mothers' perceptions of the fathers' competence with their quantity of involvement with their children. The authors found that gatekeeping behavior is a mediating cause between the fathers' competence and the father involvement. When the mothers noticed that the fathers were more competent, they would engage in fewer gatekeeping behaviors. McBride et al., (2005) examined how the mothers' beliefs influenced the quantity of the fathers' involvement. Interestingly, it was found the mothers' beliefs about the fathers' role influence the relationship between the fathers' views of their role and the fathers' involvement. Dated research by DeLuccie (1995) found that those mothers' attitudes toward the importance of the fathers' involvement and the mothers' satisfaction with the fathers' involvement are associated with the frequency of the fathers' involvement with caretaking. Fathers become more involved if they are emotionally supported and encouraged by the mothers. Fathers may feel more competent in their caretaking if this occurs.

Other research shows that, in addition to the mothers' views of the fathers' competence, both parents' perceptions of their care giving responsibilities are associated with parental caretaking identity and behaviors (Maurer, Pleck & Rane, 2001). For instance, the fathers' care giving identity and behavior depends on how they perceive the mothers' evaluations of their care giving behaviors. Interestingly, the mothers' self-perceptions about how the fathers evaluate their caretaking are not correlated with the mothers' caretaking behaviors. There is a relationship between the mothers' caretaking identity and how the mothers perceive the fathers' appraisals of their identity (Maurer et

al., 2001). Mothers' perceived appraisals of the fathers' evaluations may play a role in confirming their role as mothers.

The fathers' attitudes and beliefs influence some aspects, but not all aspects, of maternal gatekeeping. It has been stated previously that maternal attitudes play a significant role in controlling the fathers' involvement, particularly inhibiting their involvement (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al., 2005). However, a father may perceive that the mother's attitude and beliefs influence his father-involvement. Roy and Dyson (2005) examined fathers' views about whether mothers encourage father-involvement or restrict father involvement in their children's lives. They interviewed 40 fathers who were incarcerated and relied on a qualitative method to determine the findings. There were 74% of the fathers who reported, that even though they were incarcerated, mothers encouraged their involvement. Some fathers, 28%, reported that mothers encouraged and discouraged their involvement. This study reveals the fathers' perceptions of Maternal Gatekeeping behaviors, determining that it does not only prevent father involvement, but that it also encourages involvement. The problem with Roy and Dyson's (2005) study is that in their sampling, these fathers were removed and were discouraged from the family system by society, and not by the mothers. Therefore the situational context may have influenced the fathers' hopeful expectations to be more involved in their children's lives, thus leading them to perceive that the mothers encouraged their involvement.

Limitations within the Research

The problem with some of the research is the reliance on survey data rather than on behavioral observations among parents. Survey data limits external validity because it

does not measure real life behaviors. For instance, the maternal gatekeeping literature uses questionnaires to assess parents' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors to determine the correlation with gatekeeping behaviors (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al., 2005; Maurer et al., 2001; Roy & Dyson, 2005). Currently, there are no studies incorporating survey and observational methods to examine how gatekeeping behaviors reinforce parental behaviors during family interactions, such as social problem solving. A correlation study combining survey and observation methods can discover more closely how maternal gatekeeping impacts parental differences in modeling during social problem solving.

The research that examines parental problem solving skills lacks the specificity in identifying the problem that parents are supposed to be solving. For instance, the use of games, puzzles or self-report questionnaires seems the most convenient when examining parental differences in problem solving but may not accurately measure the parent's general problem solving orientation and skills (Elias et al., 1985; Fagot & Gauvain, 1997; Gauvain et al., 2002; Jaffee & D'Zurilla, 2003; Mondell & Tyler, 1981). The following study addresses some of these research limitations.

Chapter 3

Purpose of the Study

Research supports differences in parental behaviors in the social problem solving process. These differences are between mothers' and fathers' interactions with their children. A contributing influence related to these differences stems from mothers inhibiting the fathers' involvement during the social problem solving process with their children. The mothers' inhibiting styles are associated with maternal gatekeeping behaviors and with their perceptions of the fathers' competence in parenting. As a result, the mothers have a greater impact with their social problem solving styles and their Attributional styles toward their children.

Statement of Hypotheses

Based on the literature, the following are rationales for the hypotheses. Therefore, the present study examines the following hypotheses based on parental differences in their interactions during social problem solving tasks:

1. Fathers' behaviors will change when they interact with their children alone as compared with the times when they interact with their children in the presence of their spouses.
2. The degree to which fathers' behaviors change will be related to the degree to which mothers engage in gatekeeping behaviors.
3. The degree to which fathers' behaviors change will be related to the mothers' beliefs about how competent fathers are. That is, the more frequently mothers believe that fathers are competent, the less frequently fathers will alter their behaviors in their presence.

4. The more frequently that mothers believe that fathers are competent, the less likely will they be to engage in gatekeeping behaviors.

Justification for Each Hypotheses

Fathers may engage in different problem solving styles depending on the presence of mothers during the interactions. Fathers become less engaged in problem solving with the child when the mothers are present, and more highly engaged in problem solving with the child when they are not present. The fathers who are less engaged in the problem solving task have lower perceptions of their parenting competence. Fathers' competence depends on the mothers' perceptions of the fathers' family involvement and caretaking roles.

When mothers are present, fathers disengage from the social problem solving task because the mothers are dominating. This disengagement by the fathers models a maladaptive problem solving style, such as an avoidant style. The fathers who portray this avoidant style become passive and dependent on the mothers' social problem solving responses. The modeling occurs when a child observes the father's avoidance of solving the problem and his dependence on the mother to provide suggestions.

When the mothers are not present, fathers model positive problem solving orientation and adaptive problem solving styles. The modeling occurs when the child observes the father engage in positive and adaptive problem solving by taking charge of the task process and providing strategies for the solution. The father may provide modeling to the child by the use of verbal praise, approval of the child's solution, and by displaying nonverbal gestures such as smiling at the child. The fathers are able to provide modeling because the mothers are not inhibiting the fathers' social problem solving styles. The fathers, therefore, may demonstrate an increase of self-control and competence in solving

the problems. For instance, they may offer more suggestions and alternatives for the problems while helping the children implement a solution.

Fathers' changes in behaviors during the presence of mothers depend on the degree to which the mother engages in maternal gatekeeping behaviors. These gatekeeping behaviors are demonstrated when the mothers take charge during the problem solving tasks, and inhibit the fathers' involvement. The mothers' taking charge behavior is displayed by interrupting the fathers, making the final decisions about how to approach the problems, and by offering more suggestions. The mothers' behaviors in taking charge during the interactions depend on their perceptions of the fathers' parenting competence. In other words, if the mother perceives the father as less competent she will dominate the social problem solving task. If the mother perceives the father as more competent, the less likely will she be to engage in gatekeeping behaviors. The mother's perception of the father's competence depends on how she perceives his care taking responsibilities and father- involvement with their child.

During the interaction, when the mothers take charge, the fathers are focused on the mothers. During this occurrence, fathers model the mothers' dominance during the social problem solving tasks. Therefore, mothers have a greater impact in modeling social problem solving styles. The modeling occurs when the children observe how the fathers' nonverbal and verbal behavior is directed toward the mothers. For instance, a father may stop talking and physically turn his head toward the mother when she is offering a suggestion during the task and verbally prompt the child to pay attention to the mother. This provides modeling for the child to pay attention and listen to the mother when she is

speaking. The father's modeling of the mother's domination may appear to reflect in the child if the child begins to interact more frequently with the mother during the task.

Because mothers take charge of the social problem solving interaction when fathers are present, they are providing modeling of their causal explanations, or Attributional Styles, for the social problems. The research has shown that causal attributions are correlated with one's problem solving orientation. For instance, there is a strong correlation between a pessimistic explanatory style and negative problem solving orientation. Therefore, if mothers perceive the problems as threatening, verbalize a negative outcome for the problem and contribute negative causes for the event, they model a negative problem solving orientation and a pessimistic Attributional Style. Their children may acquire the problem solving orientation and Attributional Style by observing the mothers' responses during the problem solving task. Children may observe mothers exhibiting a positive or negative problem solving orientation and an optimistic or pessimistic Attributional Style. Mothers model causal explanations for events by verbalizing praise or positive feedback when the responses are similar to their causal explanations.

Research supporting the Hypotheses

Research exploring the interactions between mothers and fathers during problem solving tasks has found that mothers take charge during these interactions. Mothers taking charge may be attributed to Maternal Gatekeeping beliefs and behaviors which inhibit the fathers' involvement with their children (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; McBride et al., 2003). Mothers who are high in gatekeeping behaviors report a reluctance to hand

over the family responsibilities to the fathers, proving to others that they have strong maternal identities, and setting differentiated family roles (Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Mothers take charge in responsiveness because they may question the fathers' competence in helping the children problem solve. The mother's beliefs about the father's competence determine the father's involvement with their child. Fathers are concerned about how mothers perceive their competence within the father role (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Maurer et al. 2001; McBride et al. 2005). If mothers perceive fathers as competent, they engage in fewer maternal gatekeeping behaviors. If mothers perceive the fathers as less competent, they engage in more maternal gatekeeping behaviors (Fagan & Barnett, 2003).

There is research supporting the fact that parents interact differently during social problem solving tasks when they perform the tasks together. For instance, mothers are more responsive to their children than fathers on novel problem solving tasks; this results in the mothers having a greater influence than the fathers with problem solving styles (Gauvain et al., 2002; Jafee & D'Zurilla, 2003). Both parents provided similar instructions for their children on tasks, but mothers provided more instructions on tasks with which their children were not familiar (Gauvain et al., 2002). Research by Vuchinich & Angelelli (1995) found that fathers engaged in more negative problem solving when the mothers and children had higher coalitions. However, they also found that in the families with effective problem solving abilities, both of the parents were less negative and the fathers were more positive.

In addition to the maternal gatekeeping theory that explains parental differences in social problem solving, there are gender differences in social problem solving abilities.

D'Zurilla et al., (1998) found that problem solving orientation differs between males and females. They found that males were higher in positive problem orientation and lower in negative problem orientation than females. Based on this research, it may be safe to assume that fathers engage in a positive problem orientations and adaptive problem solving styles when mothers are not present. These behaviors are more likely to occur during the absence of mothers because the mothers are not inhibiting the fathers' styles.

Chapter 4

Methods

Design

The following study is an observational design examining four categories of correlation variables: social problem solving, Attributional Style, father's competence and gatekeeping behaviors. The participants selected were from a community based sample with no random assignment. There were no treatment conditions. The race and ethnicity consisted predominately of White participants. This limited the racial and ethnic diversity because of a community based sample recruited by respondent-driven sampling (Heckathorn, 2002).

Participants

The participants included 19 family triads (mother, father and child, i.e. 57 individuals); the children were between the ages of 9 and 12 years. The families who were selected by the respondent-driven sampling were contacted by telephone to determine if they had a general interest in participating in the study. The families who were interested were scheduled to have appointments in their homes. There were two families who scheduled appointments but were not at home when the investigator arrived at their homes, leaving a total of 17 family triads (mother, father, and child, i.e. 51 individuals) who participated and completed this study.

The inclusion criteria for this study entailed married parents who were living together. The children were between the ages of 9 and 12 years, either male or female. The exclusion criteria consisted of divorced parents, step-parents and adoptive parents.

Children younger than 9-years old and children older than 12-years old were not included.

The informed consent and assent were obtained from the parents and children who agreed to participate in the study during the scheduled appointment. The informed consent and assent described the current research and obtained the parents' and children's signed agreements for participation in the study. The researcher reviewed the forms with the parents and children 20 minutes before the study began.

Of the fathers who participated in the study, 64.7% were between 40 to 49 years-old; 29.4% were between the 50 to 59 years old, and 5.9% were between 30 to 39 years-old. Of the mothers, there were 70.6% were between 40 to 49 year-old; 17.6% were between 50 to 59 years-old, and 11.8% were between 30 to 39 years-old. The race or ethnic background of the fathers consisted of 94.1% Caucasian, and 5.9% Native American. The mothers' races or ethnic backgrounds consisted of 88.2% Caucasian and 11.8% who were classified as Other. The levels of education for fathers involved 29.4% college graduates, 23.5% some college, 23.5% vocational training, 17.6% master's degree and 5.9% high school graduate. Of the mothers, 23.5% had some college experience, 23.5% had masters degrees, 17.6% had bachelors degrees, 17.6% high school graduates, 11.8% vocational training, and 5.9% doctoral degree. There were 35.3% of the families who had a household income from 40 to 100,000, and 64.7% had a household income of over 100,000. Of the children, 58% were males and 42% were females. The children's ages consisted of 41.2% who were12-years-old, 29.4% who were 11-years-old, 23.5% who were 10 years-old, and 5.9% who were 9-years-old.

Measures

Demographics. The demographic information was collected with a standard questionnaire which included information about the ages and gender of all family members, the parents' education levels, the parents' employment status, race, ethnicity, the number of family members, occupations and family incomes (see Appendix A for questionnaire).

Social Problem Solving Inventory-Revised: Short Version. The social problem solving inventory-revised-short form (SPSI-R:S) is a 25 item self-report questionnaire that was developed to measure problem solving orientation and interpersonal problem solving skills (D'Zurilla, Nezu, & Maydeu-Olivares, 2002). The participants were asked to rate how true each item was for them on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all true of me) to 5 (extremely true of me). There are five major scales, each containing five items measuring five different problem solving dimensions: (1) positive problem orientation (PPO), (2) negative problem orientation (NPO), (3) rational problem solving (RPS), (4) avoidant style problem solving (AS), and (5) impulsivity/carelessness style (ICS).

The SPSI-R: S has been shown to have good reliability and validity (D'Zurilla et al., 2002). Within a sample of 583 individuals, the researchers found significant correlations ranging from .80 for PPO, .92 for NPO, .95 for ICS, and .89 for AS. The test-retest (over a 3-week period) has shown high correlations ranging from .72 for PPO, .88 for NPO, .82 for RPS, .78 for ICS, and .78 for AS. These correlations included adolescents, young adults, middle-aged adults and elderly adults, from four different samples. The SPSI-R demonstrated good concurrent, predictive, convergent and discriminant validity among diversified samples (D'Zurilla et al., 2002).

This measure assesses social problem solving processes, determining each parent's strengths and deficits within problem solving, as opposed to the observational measurements which measured the parental outcome performance during the social problem solving tasks.

The Inventory of Father Involvement. The Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI) measured mother's perception of the father's parenting competence and measured the father's perception of his own parenting (Bradford, Hawkins, Palkovitz, Christiansen, & Day, 2002; see Appendix E). Sample items included encouraging children to develop their talents; reading to their children; being attentive to their children's daily lives; spending time together and talking; giving praise and affection; encouraging success in school; disciplining and teaching responsibility; providing for the family; and providing support to the mother. This measure determines "how good of a job" the fathers perform by ranking each item on a Likert scale. The scale included response choices from 0 through 6, in which 0 is very poor and 6 is excellent. The authors found that the reliability coefficient for all nine items on the IFI was .98.

Maternal Gatekeeping Measure. The Maternal Gatekeeping Measure (MGM) measured the mother's beliefs and behaviors that inhibit the father's involvement. The MGM gauged three aspects of the mother's beliefs and behaviors; these included their hesitancy to relinquish family responsibilities to the father by setting rigid standards and responsibilities, how strongly she has to prove to herself and others that she has a valuable maternal identity, and her expectations and beliefs about the allocation of family work and roles (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; see Appendix F). The MGM is operationalized by including all three aspects (e.g. standards and responsibility, maternal identity and

differentiated family roles) of the mother's beliefs and behaviors. The standards and responsibility items differentiated mothers who do not want to relinquish family responsibility and mothers who permit fathers to perform family responsibilities, assesses the mothers' abilities to take charge, assesses the mothers' high standards for family work, and determines whether or not mothers have to redo tasks or do tasks themselves because their partners are not skilled enough or do not know how to do them. The maternal identity confirmation items assessed how mothers relate to doing family work, with how they are influenced by families' and friends' judgments about their abilities as mothers and wives. On both of these concepts the participants are asked to rate responses on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 4(very much like me). The differentiated family roles scale assessed the mothers' beliefs and expectations about family work and participation in the labor force. Participants are asked to rate the responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Then, an overall gatekeeping score is calculated.

The MGM shows modest reliability and construct validity (Allan & Hawkins, 1999). They found that all three concepts were interrelated but were conceptually different dimensions because the scales positively and significantly related to each other.

Summary of Standardized Measures

- Social Problem Solving Inventory
    - Positive Problem Orientation (PPO)
    - Negative Problem Orientation (NPO)
    - Rational Problem-Solving (RPS)
    - Avoidant Style Problem-Solving (AS)
    - Impulsivity Carelessness Style (ICS)
- Inventory Of Father Involvement (IFI)
- Maternal Gatekeeping Measure (MGM)
    - Standards And Responsibility
    - Maternal Identity

- Differentiated Family Roles

Procedure

The families engaged in a series of parent-child joint problem-solving tasks as well as a series of standardized questionnaires described above. All data collection was conducted in the participants' homes. After the investigator arrived at the family's home, a general introduction to the project was reviewed with each family (see Appendix C for detailed instructions for the families) and the two-step process (questionnaires and videotaped interactions) was explained to each family. The questionnaires included:

- The Demographic Questionnaire
- The Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI)
- The Maternal Gatekeeping Measure (MGM)
- The Social Problem Solving Inventory-Revised: Short (SPSI-R:S)

Each was completed independently in separate rooms before videotaping their observed interaction.

While the parents completed the questionnaires, the investigator set up the video camera in a different location within the home, where filming of the parent-child interactions occurred. Three types of interactions were conducted in a counterbalanced fashion:

- mother-child only dyad
- father-child only dyad
- mother-father-child dyad

At the beginning of each interaction, the investigator brought the appropriate family members into the videotaping area where they were provided with the problem solving vignettes, turned on the video-camera and exited the room (see Appendix H for social problem solving vignettes). Families were asked to read each vignette and to answer a brief series of questions. When they finished the second problem in the vignettes, the

second dyad (mother-child dyad if the father-child had gone first, or the father-child dyad if the mother-child dyad had gone first) was brought into the videotaping area. The investigator briefly explained to the child that the directions had to be repeated for the second parent. They were provided with a different set of problem solving vignettes and were videotaped. Finally, when the second group was finished, the triad repeated the procedure with a third set of vignettes (see Appendix H). After all of the dyads and triad completed the social problem solving tasks they were debriefed about the study by the investigator.

Observational Coding

Three sets of coding procedures were utilized in analyzing the parent-child interactions:

- Social Problem Solving
- Maternal Gatekeeping
- Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations (CAVE) Coding

The reliability of the observational coding was determined by two observers who independently rated the same videotapes. The independent observers were uninformed about the hypothesis in order to prevent a bias. All ratings achieved a 90% agreement rate; all of the Cohen's Kappa's were at .90 or greater. The validity of observational coding has demonstrated convergent, concurrent and discriminate validity by trained observers (Lorber, 2006).

Social Problem Solving Coding. The interactions of verbal behavior among dyads and triads (mother-child, the father-child dyad and the mother-father-child) were measured by observational coding of the videotapes. Individual ratings were given for:

Fathers when interacting with their child alone
Fathers when interacting with the child and mother all together

Mothers when interacting with their child alone
Mothers when interacting with the child and father all together

Child when interacting with the father alone
Child when interacting with the mother alone
Child when interacting with the mother and father all together

Each individual was given a score for:

Positive Problem Orientation (PPO)
Adaptive Problem Solving (APS)
Negative Problem Orientation (NPO)
Maladaptive Problem Solving (MPS)

Therefore, fathers were given a total of eight scores: four scores given while interacting with their child alone ($PPO_{father\ with\ child}$, $APS_{father\ with\ child}$, $NPO_{father\ with\ child}$, and $MPS_{father\ with\ child}$) and four scores giving during the triadic interactions ($PPO_{father\ in\ triad}$, $APS_{father\ in\ triad}$, $NPO_{father\ in\ triad}$, and $MPS_{father\ in\ triad}$); mothers were also given a total of eight scores and children received a total of twelve scores:

$PPO_{with\ father}$
$PPO_{with\ mother}$
$PPO_{in\ triad}$

$APS_{with\ father}$
$APS_{with\ mother}$
$APS_{in\ triad}$

$NPO_{with\ father}$
$NPO_{with\ mother}$
$NPO_{in\ triad}$

$MPS_{with\ father}$
$MPS_{with\ mother}$
$MPS_{in\ triad}$

The observational positive problem orientation was operationalized as: when one verbalizes that the problem can be solved with effort and time, one has self-control in

solving the problem; one verbalizes a solution and sees the problem as a challenge. The observational adaptive problem solving was operationalized as: when one verbalizes a positive orientation to the problem, verbalizes at least two or more solutions, decides on one solution and verbalizes the solution to solve the problem. The observed negative problem orientation was operationalized as: when one verbalizes a hesitation to solve the problem, one verbalizes the problem as not able to be solved, and one views the problem as frustrating and threatening. The observed maladaptive problem solving was operationalized as: when one rushes into a solution that is poorly planned and/or is dependent or passive in relying on others to solve the problem.

A 5-point scale was used to rate the observed verbal problem solving, ranging from 1-not at all, 2-sometimes, 3-moderately, 4-frequently, and 5-always. The two observers rated the mother, the father and the child separately within each dyad and triad for both social problem solving tasks that were administered.

Maternal Gatekeeping Coding. The observed maternal gatekeeping behaviors were measured by viewing the videotapes. The mother's verbal and nonverbal behaviors were measured during mother-father-child triad. Maternal gatekeeping was operationalized as: time (s) when the mother controls or interjects the conversation. The concept of control was defined as: time (s) when the mother initiates the conversation during the problem solving activity either by reading or answering the questions herself or by directing someone else to read or answer the question. Interjecting was defined as: time (s) when one interrupts other's reading or responses to questions either verbally or by a nonverbal cue (e.g. looking at them) and also suggests an alternative answer. A single gatekeeping score was rated on a 5-point scale based on the degree to which the mother engaged in

gatekeeping behaviors, ranging from 1-not at all, 2-sometimes, 3-moderately, 4-frequently, and 5-always.

Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations. The Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations (CAVE) is a commonly used measure to assess explanatory style (Schulman, Castellon & Seligman, 1989; see Appendix F for CAVE). The CAVE approach allows spoken material to be measured for explanatory style along three causal dimensions. The first step was to identify the good and bad explanations. Then these explanations were rated along three dimensions on a 7-point Likert scale. These three dimensions determined causal explanations for events such as: internal versus external, stable versus unstable, and global versus specific. The ratings ranged from 1 to 7 for each dimension; 7 represented internal, stable and global explanations and 1 represented external, unstable and specific explanations.

	rating = 1	rating = 7
internal-external	external	internal
stable-unstable	unstable	stable
global-specific	Specific	global

These three ratings were given to the fathers twice: once when interacting with his child alone and once when interacting with both child and mother. Likewise, mothers were given these three ratings twice: once when interacting with her child alone and once when interacting with both child and father. Children received these ratings three times: once when interacting with mother alone, once when interacting with father alone, and a final time when interacting with both mother and father.

Research comparing the CAVE to the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) has helped to support the reliability and validity of the CAVE (Schulman, Castellon & Seligman, 1989). The CAVE has shown high interrater reliability for negative explanatory style and positive explanatory style (Schulman et al. 1989). Both the negative and positive explanatory styles have .80 interrater reliabilities. The CAVE has shown to have good construct validity because it correlated highly, .71, with the ASQ.

Chapter 5

Results

Gatekeeping and Father Involvement

Both mothers and fathers completed the Inventory of Father Involvement which measured each parent's perception of the father's parenting competence. The higher the score the more highly the respondent believes that the father is competent. Maternal gatekeeping was assessed in two ways, (1) ratings during videotaped interactions and (2) maternal self-report. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to determine the relationships between maternal gatekeeping and father's parenting competence.

Table 1

Correlations Between Reports of Father Involvement and Maternal Gatekeeping

Variable	Father Involvement	
	Mother Report	Father Report
Observed Maternal Gatekeeping	-.336	-.320
Self-Report of Maternal Gatekeeping		
Standards and Responsibility	.132	-.273
Maternal Identity	.603*	.121
Differentiated Family Roles	-.042	.041
Total Gatekeeping Score	.219	-.104

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results in Table 1 indicated that mothers who report that they have to prove to themselves and to others that they have valuable maternal identities are strongly related to mothers' perceptions that fathers are, in fact, competent ($r = .603$). However, fathers' perceptions of their own competence are not related to mothers' self-reported gatekeeping behaviors. Although not significant (perhaps due to lack of sufficient power), there were negative correlations between both mothers' and fathers' reports of

father competence and observed maternal gatekeeping behaviors ($r = -.336$ *and* $r = -.320$, respectively).

Maternal Gatekeeping and Maternal Self-Reported Social Problem-Solving

Mothers completed the maternal gatekeeping measure and the self-reported social problem solving measure; their gatekeeping behaviors were rated during the videotaped interactions. This determined if the mother engaged in gatekeeping behaviors and assessed her social problem solving orientation and styles. The higher the score in gatekeeping, the more likely it was that she engaged in gatekeeping behaviors. The higher the score in social problem solving, the more frequently did the mother engage in the problem orientation and problem solving style. Maternal gatekeeping was measured by maternal self-report and ratings during the videotaped interactions. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to determine the relationships between maternal gatekeeping (self-report and ratings during the videotaped interactions) and maternal reported social problem solving.

Table 2

Maternal Gatekeeping And Self-Reported Social Problem-Solving

	Observed	Self-Report			
	Gatekeeping	Standards/ Responsibilities	Identity	Differentiated Family Roles	Total
Positive Problem Orientation	.084	-.099	-.302	.408	-.041
Negative Problem Orientation	.183	-.644**	-.424~~	-.350	-.611**
Rational Problem Solving	-.057	.138	-.207	-.288	-.040
Impulsive Carelessness Style	.537*	-.236	-.169	-.461~~	-.382
Avoidant Style Problem Solving	.475~~	-.140	-.171	-.162	.152
Total Problem Solving	.026	-.473~~	-.497*	-.198	-.529*

~~ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results in Table 2 indicated that mothers who report not wanting to relinquish their family standards and responsibilities to fathers are associated with not perceiving a problem as unsolvable or threatening *(r=-.644)*. Mothers who report the reluctance to hand over the family responsibilities to the fathers by setting rigid standards, who have the need to confirm their maternal identities, and who set differentiated family roles are strongly related to a lower negative problem solving orientation *(r=-.611)*. Mothers who were observed controlling and interjecting during the interactions with the fathers and children, are strongly related to engaging in rushed and poorly planned solutions *(r=.537)*. Mothers who report that they have to prove to themselves and to others that they have valuable maternal identities are strongly related their reports of not coping successfully with a problem and of perceiving that they do not have the ability to control or solve the problem *(r=-.497)*. Mothers who report overall gatekeeping beliefs such as the reluctance to hand over the family responsibilities to the fathers by setting rigid standards, by the need to confirm their maternal identities, and by setting differentiated family roles, are associated with the perception of not coping with a problem and not perceiving it as solvable *(r=-.529)*.

Maternal Gatekeeping and Observed Maternal Social Problem Solving

Mothers who completed the maternal gatekeeping measure were rated in their gatekeeping behaviors and social problem orientation and styles during the videotaped interactions. This determined if the mother engaged in gatekeeping behaviors and also determined the type of social problem solving orientation and style during her interaction with the child and then with the father and child together. The higher the score in gatekeeping, the more likely she engaged in gatekeeping behaviors. The higher the score

in social problem solving, the more likely the mother engaged in the problem orientation and problem solving style. Maternal gatekeeping was measured by maternal self-report and ratings during the videotaped interactions. Social problem orientation and styles were rated separately when she was with the child versus when she was with the father and child together. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to determine the relationships between maternal gatekeeping (self-report and ratings during the videotaped interactions) and maternal observed social problem solving.

Table 3

Maternal Gatekeeping and Social Problem Solving

	Observed	Self-Report			
	Gatekeeping	Standards/ Responsibilities	Identity	Differentiated Family Roles	Total
Positive Problem Orientation with Child	.360	.281	.210	.127	.334
Positive Problem Orientation in Triad	.654**	-.277	-.323	.039	-.269
Adaptive Problem Solving with Child	.491~	-.352	-.005	-.378	-.315
Adaptive Problem Solving in Triad	.363	-.409	-.214	-.196	-.330
Negative Problem Orientation with Child	.019	.323	.568*	.322	.467~
Negative Problem Orientation in Triad	.019	-.085	.132	.028	-.014
Maladaptive Problem-Solving with Child	.032	-.425	-.035	-.362	-.394
Maladaptive Problem-Solving in Triad	-.420	-.029	.024	.000	-.028

~ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results in Table 3 indicated that the mothers' observed controlling and interjecting during the interaction with the father and child are associated with their abilities to verbalize the fact that a challenging problem can be solved and that they are able to express a solution to the problem *(r=.654).* Mothers who report that they have to prove to themselves and to others that they have valuable maternal identities are strongly related to their abilities to express a hesitation to solve the problem and may view the problem as frustrating and threatening during their interactions with a child *(.568).*

Maternal Gatekeeping and Cave Coding During Joint Problem-Solving

Mothers completed the maternal gatekeeping measure and their gatekeeping behaviors were rated during the videotaped interactions. The mother's, the father's and the child's internal and external, stable and unstable, global and specific causal attributions were rated, using the Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations (CAVE), during the videotaped interactions. The child was rated along these six dimensions; these occurred in time with the mother alone, time with the father alone and then time with both, the mother and father. The mother was rated along these six dimensions; these occurred in time with the child alone and then time with the child and father together. The father was rated along all these dimensions; these occurred in time with the child alone, and then with the child and mother together. The higher the score on CAVE the more internal, stable and global were one's causal attributions. The lower the score on the CAVE the more external, unstable and specific one's causal attributions were. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to determine the relationships between maternal gatekeeping and the mother's, the father's, and the child's causal attributions.

Table 4

Cave Coding for the Internal-External Dimension and Maternal Gatekeeping

	Observed	Self-Report			
	Gatekeeping	Standards/ Responsibilities	Identity	Differentiated Family Roles	Total
CHILD					
Internal-External Child with Father	-.434~	-.191	-.297	.147	-.192
Internal-External Child with Mother	-.036	.652**	.437~	.211	.632**
Internal-External Child in Triad	-.437~	.330	.332	.354	.517*
FATHER					
Internal-External Father with Child	.024	,258	.267	.279	.300
Internal-External Father in Triad	.230	.008	-.109	.-059	-.025
MOTHER					
Internal-External Mother with Child	-.024	.018	.035	.203	.090
Internal-External Mother in Triad	-.195	.141	-.016	-.168	.041

~ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results in Table 4 demonstrated that mothers' reports of not wanting to relinquish their family standards and responsibilities are strongly related to the children's attributing causes of social problems to their own behaviors, and to(?) physical or mental characteristics when interacting with these mothers *(r=.652)*. Mothers' reports of overall gatekeeping beliefs such as the reluctance to hand over the family responsibilities by setting rigid standards, by the need to confirm their maternal identities, and by setting differentiated family roles, are associated with the children's attributing causes of social problems to their own behaviors, and to physical or mental characteristics when interacting with these mothers *(r=.632)*. Mothers' reports of overall gatekeeping beliefs were found to be strongly related to the children's attributing causal explanations of social problems to their own behaviors, and to physical or mental characteristics when interacting both with the mother and with the father *(r=.517)*.

Table 5

Cave Coding for the Stable-Unstable Dimension and Maternal Gatekeeping

	Observed	Self-Report			
	Gatekeeping	Standards/ Responsibilities	Identity	Differentiated Family Roles	Total
CHILD					
Stable-Unstable Child with Father	-.024	-.506*	-.215	-.344	-.541*
Stable-Unstable Child with Mother	.451~	-.083	-.066	-.258	-.202
Stable-Unstable Child in Triad	-.176	.314	.194	.132	.299
FATHER					
Stable-Unstable Father with Child	-.388	-.046	.169	.014	.027
Stable-Unstable Father in Triad	.119	-.070	.076	.367	.111
MOTHER					
Stable-Unstable Mother with Child	-.147	-.419	.177	-.474	-.491
Stable-Unstable Mother in Triad	-.594*	.034	.072	.216	.099

~ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results in Table 5 indicated that mothers' reports of not wanting to relinquish their family standards and responsibilities are associated with the children's attributing causes of social problems as unstable, not likely to happen again *(r=-.506)*. Mothers' reports of overall gatekeeping beliefs such as the reluctance to hand over the family responsibilities by setting rigid standards, by the need to confirm their maternal identities, and by setting differentiated family roles, were related to the children's attributing unstable causes to problems (the problem is not likely to happen again), when interacting with their fathers *(r=-.541)*. Mothers who were observed engaging in more controlling and interjecting behaviors during their interactions with the children and fathers attributed the causes of the problems as not likely to happen again *(r=-.594)*.

Table 6

Cave Coding for the Global-Specific Dimension and Maternal Gatekeeping

	Observed	Self-Report			
	Gatekeeping	Standards/ Responsibilities	Identity	Differentiated Family Roles	Total
CHILD					
Global-Specific Child with Father	.590*	-.261	-.337	-.300	-.410
Global-Specific Child with Mother	.283	-.377	-.278	-.021	-.378
Global-Specific Child in Triad	.105	-.612**	-.403	-.114	-.578*
FATHER					
Global-Specific Father with Child	.339	-.369	-.135	.230	-.244
Global-Specific Father in Triad	.335	-.541	.070	.472	-.329
MOTHER					
Global-Specific Mother with Child	.572	-.208	.168	-.345	-.309
Global-Specific Mother in Triad	-.304	.206	-.060	-.219	.100

$\sim p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results in Table 6 demonstrated that mothers' reports of not wanting to relinquish their family standards and responsibilities are strongly associated with the children's attributing causes for problems as affecting only certain areas of their lives when they are interacting with their mothers and fathers *(r=-.612)*. It was found that mothers who were observed engaging in gatekeeping behaviors, such as controlling and interjecting during the interactions, is associated with the children's attributing causes of problems as affecting their entire lives during interactions with their fathers *(r=.590)*. Mothers who report overall gatekeeping beliefs such as the reluctance to hand over the family responsibilities by setting rigid standards, by the need to confirm their maternal identities, and by setting differentiated family roles, are related to the children's attributing specific causal attributions to problems (the problem affects only certain areas of their lives) when interacting with their mothers and fathers *(r=-.578)*.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for CAVE of Mothers and Fathers alone

	Mother Alone		Mother with All	
Causal Explanations	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Internal-External	2.86	1.62	3.22	2.27
Stable-Unstable	3.88	2.14	2.05	1.70
Global-Specific	3.60	1.81	4.30	1.48

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for CAVE of Mothers and Fathers with all

	Father Alone		Father with All	
Causal Explanations	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Internal-External	2.82	1.78	2.57	2.09
Stable-Unstable	3.10	1.74	3.60	2.30
Global-Specific	3.92	2.02	3.78	1.86

A paired t-test was conducted to compare the differences in times when fathers were alone versus times when with the mothers and when mothers were alone versus times when they were with fathers, in causal attributions in Table 7 and Table 8. As seen in Table1 and 2, there was a significant difference in the mothers' stable and unstable attributions (M=3.88, SD=2.14) when alone, versus times when they were with all of the family members (M=2.05, SD=1.70). Mother engaged in more stable attributions when they were alone with a child. In other words, the mother perceived the problem as happening all the time and as unsolvable when she interacted with the child alone.

Maternal Gatekeeping and Paternal Self Report Social Problem Solving

Mothers completed the maternal gatekeeping measure and were rated in their gatekeeping behaviors during the videotaped interactions. This determined if the mother engaged in gatekeeping behaviors. The higher the score in gatekeeping, the more likely it was that she engaged in gatekeeping behaviors. Maternal gatekeeping was measured by maternal self-report and ratings during the videotaped interactions. The fathers completed the Social Problem Solving Inventory to assess their social problem orientations and styles. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to determine the relationships between maternal gatekeeping and the fathers' social problem solving orientations and styles.

Table 9

Maternal Gatekeeping and Paternal Self Report Social Problem Solving

	Observed	Self-Report			
	Gatekeeping	Standards/ Responsibilities	Identity	Differentiated Family Roles	Total
Positive Problem Orientation	-.463~	-.101	.096	.085	.031
Positive Problem Orientation	.001	-.020	.078	.279	.058
Rational Problem Solving	-.051	-.166	-.174	-.013	-.163
Impulsive/Careless Problem Solving	.202	.233	.181	.118	.253
Avoidant Problem Solving	-.080	-.046	-.088	.364	.023
Total	-.194	.148	.221	.362	.289

~ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results in Table 9 indicated that observational gatekeeping and the fathers self-reported positive problem orientations were found to be significantly, negatively correlated, r(n=17)=-.46, p=.06. The higher the maternal gatekeeping among the mother, the less often the father engaged in positive problem orientation.

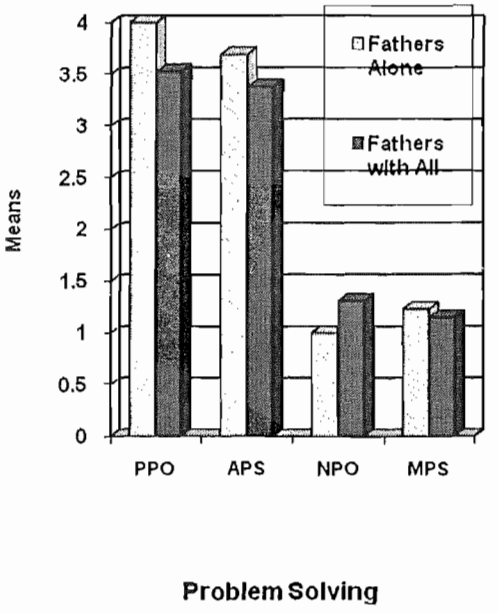

Figure 1

Observational PS with Fathers

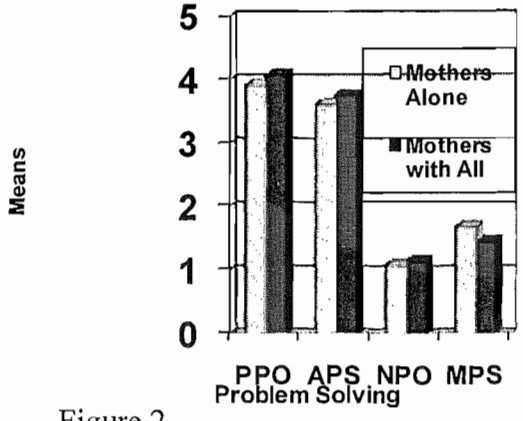

Figure 2

Observational PS with Mothers

A paired-samples t-test was conducted in Figures 1 and Figure 2 to compare fathers' problem solving and mothers' problem solving when alone versus when all together. As noted in Figure 1, there was a significant difference in the fathers' positive problem orientations (M=4.0, SD=1.00) when they were alone compared with times when they were with the mother and child (M=3.53, SD=.94). The fathers engaged in more positive problem solving orientation when they were alone with the child and the mothers were not present. As seen in Figure 2, mothers do not change in their problem solving styles when they are alone versus the times when they are with the fathers and the children; there were no significant differences and this is most likely due to the limited power within the study.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Although research has found that maternal gatekeeping inhibits fathers' involvement with their children (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; McBride et al. 2003), maternal gatekeeping has not been investigated while observing mothers' and fathers' interactions during a social problem solving task with their children. In this study, mothers and fathers interactions were observed with their children during a social problem solving task to determine differences in their problem solving styles and attributional styles because of maternal gatekeeping behaviors. By exploring and determining if these differences are correlated with maternal gatekeeping behaviors may allow for further opportunities to understand the clinical and research implications of maternal gatekeeping.

The most significant findings, which is supported through previous research and consistent with other findings, are that mothers engage in maternal gatekeeping behaviors and that fathers interact differently in the presence of mothers while engaging in a social problem task (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; DeLuccie, 1995; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gauvin et al., 2002; Pakaslahti et al.,1998). It was found that in the observed and reported maternal gatekeeping, the mothers took charge in the social problem solving tasks. More specifically, if the mothers reported a valued maternal identity they then perceived the fathers as competent. Contrary to the hypothesized expectation and previous research, mothers did not engage in less gatekeeping if they perceived fathers as competent (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Maurer et al., 2001; Roy & Dyson, 2005). However, when the mothers were taking charge in the observed maternal gatekeeping, they engaged in positive problem orientation while solving the problem with the child and the father.

Even though it was found that fathers shifted their problem orientations, not their styles, in the presence of mothers, this did not support the suggested hypothesis that the fathers would model a different problem solving style, dependent on the presence of the mothers. This may have been due to the operational definition of the problem orientation codings. It was difficult to operationalized their schema related to their orientation and then code their schema. It is interesting to note that the fathers engaged in more positive problem solving when alone with the children, versus the times when with the children and mothers. When fathers have an opportunity to interact without the mothers, they modeled positive problem orientations. Mothers may not encourage the fathers' involvement because this may be perceived as threatening to their roles, their identities or responsibilities as mothers, or the fathers may respect their maternal gatekeeping roles, allowing the mothers to take charge. Overall, the fathers' shift in their styles in problem solving is supported in previous research (D'Zurilla et al., 1998; Gauvin et al., 2002; Pakaslahti et al., 1998).

There were further findings which were not hypothesized, but which are noteworthy. First, some of the findings indicated that maternal gatekeeping was associated with mothers not engaging in negative problem orientation. In particular, mothers who reported not wanting to relinquish their family standards and responsibilities reported that they did not engage in negative problem orientation. This seems to make sense because if parents do not relinquish their standards and responsibilities within a family, it suggests they may not perceive these standards and responsibilities as frustrating or threatening. Other findings indicated that mothers who reported overall gatekeeping behaviors, more specifically the mothers who did not relinquish their maternal standards and

responsibilities, were associated with the children who attributed causes of social problems to their own behaviors, and to physical or mental characteristics. The children continued to attribute the causes of the social problems to their own behaviors, and to physical or mental characteristics in the presence of their mothers and fathers, and with the fathers alone. The children did not shift their internal causal attributions during the observed problem solving task.

Clinical Implications

The findings in this study have clinical implications such as identifying and understanding the family dynamics in parental conflicts associated with problem solving; they may have additional implications in learning how gatekeeping can be utilized as a positive strength in family therapy, as opposed to a negative inhibitor of the father's involvement. Therapists should assess the mother's role in gatekeeping to better understand how and if these gatekeeping beliefs or behaviors contribute to parental conflicts with the father when the parents are raising a child with behavior problems. Research supports the fact that when a child exhibits aggressive behavior the mothers become more involved and the fathers back off (Pakaslahti et al., 1998). If there are parental conflicts in parenting because of the child's problem behaviors and the mother engages in gatekeeping beliefs and behaviors along with a negative problem solving skills and the father engages in a positive problem solving skills, this could leave detrimental social development effects on their child. Parents would need psychoeducation concerning the increased awareness about gatekeeping behaviors within the family, including how it impacts their parental communication patterns with their child, either positively or negatively.

Therapists should also determine how gatekeeping can be utilized as a positive strength in family therapy and within parent trainings. Maternal gatekeeping may not be an inhibitor of fathers' involvement, but rather become a greater influence on fathers to change their perceptions of problem solving. It may be worthwhile for the therapist to target the mother, if she engages in maternal gatekeeping, to encourage more effective communication styles among all the family members, particularly if she demonstrates positive problem solving skills. According to Minuchin (1974), the mother-father and child involve an interaction within the family system at different levels; this is a functional pattern. This functional pattern establishes how, when, and to whom to relate within the family, entailing a power hierarchy in the family, the gatekeeper. Thus, the gatekeeping may not negatively impact parental communication because of one family member taking charge; instead, it may foster and model healthier family communication patterns along with a family member who monitors and controls the long term effects of the communication functioning.

Limitations

There are limitations within this study that should be noted. The first limitation of this study is the sample. The small sample size limited the power within this investigation. The respondent- driven sampling may have limited the sample size because of the chain referral method and the fact that the subjects were recruited only one time. This depleted the population available. In this study, there were two subjects who were lost because they did not follow through with their appointments with the investigator. When conducting a study with respondent-driven sampling a problem of homophily bias arises; the subjects refer others with whom they have social ties. This leads to another limitation,

a selection bias. Most of the families were from a White, upper middle-class neighborhood. The concept of maternal gatekeeping may change according to religion, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Therefore the generalization to other populations may be limited, based on the family structures and context.

Another limitation is the lack of randomization in selecting the gender of the child within the samples. Research has shown that there is a correlation between the mother's social problem solving style and their child's or children's style, it is unknown whether or not the mother's gatekeeping behaviors change depending on the gender of her child (Gauvin et al. 2002; Jaffee & D'Zurilla, 2003). The research also shows that between the ages of 12 to 14 there are gender differences in attributional styles and negative problem solving style (Spence et al., 2002). This provides a greater reason to investigate the correlation with maternal gatekeeping, problem solving and the gender of the child.

Future Research Implications

This research is just the beginning of studies to investigate the ways in which maternal gatekeeping is correlated with family functioning in modeling social problem solving and attributional styles. There are many avenues to travel, yet undiscovered, to research the maternal gatekeeping theory. Some questions for further research are as follows: How does maternal gatekeeping impact children's social, emotional and behavioral development? Do maternal gatekeeping behaviors correlate with the gender of the child during interactions? Who is the child modeling in his or her causal attributions and problem solving orientation and skills? Do maternal gatekeeping behaviors vary across different cultures? This knowledge would add to the understanding of how defined family roles, identities and responsibilities influence children's social development.

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Appendix A

Demographics Questionnaire

Please circle the appropriate responses for the following questions:

1. What is your age?
   20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+

2. What is your gender?
   Male Female

3. What is your race or ethnicity?
   African American
   Caucasian
   Hispanic
   Asian American
   Native American
   Middle Eastern
   Other _____

4. What is your primary language?
   English Spanish French Other _____

5. How many family members live in the home?
   2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. How many children do you have?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

7. How old are your children?_____

8. What is the gender of the children?
   Male How many?
   Female How many?

9. What is the age and gender of the child participating in the study?_____

10a. What is the average number of hours per day (Monday through Friday) that you spend with the child participating in the study? _____

10b. What is the average number of hours per day (Saturday and Sunday) that you spend with the child participating in the study? _____

11. What is your highest level of education?

High School Vocational/Technical Some College
College Graduate (4 years) Masters Degree Doctoral Degree Other

12. What is your current household income in U.S. dollars?
10,000-20,000 20,000-40,000 40,000-60,000 60,000-80,000
80,000-100,000 Over 100,000

13. What are your occupations?_____

Appendix B

Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations

CAVE CODING GUIDELINES

As with the Attributional Style Questionnaire, ratings of the explanations are assigned to each of three dimensions--internal versus external, stable versus unstable, and global versus specific--using a 7 point scale.

- **Ratings range from 1 to 7 for each dimension, with**

7 representing the most internal, stable and global explanations; and

1 for the most external, unstable, and specific explanations

- **Rater's attempt to rate the subject's perception of the cause.**

- **Examine the gramatical nuances and take each phrase's rich context into account.**

The nuances of an explanation may help in rating such ambiguous and difficult causes as age, sickness, injury and social classification.

THE INTERNAL-EXTERNAL DIMENSION

- **The 7 point scale for this dimension is divided into 3 regions**

1, if the individual attributes cause to someone or something external to the self;

7, if the individual attributes cause to any behavioral, physical, or mental characteristic about the self;

2 to 6, if the individual attributes the cause of an event to some combination of the self and other.

- **This scale is not directly a measure of blame, credit, responsibility--taking or control, rather it is defined by self-caused versus other-caused--internal versus external**

- **Examples of a 1 rating include explaining an event by:**

another person's actions

the difficulty or ease of a task

time or the environment (such as a natural disaster, circumstances or the weather)

- **Examples of a *7* rating include references to the individual's own:**

personality or physical traits

behavior, decisions, ability or inability

motivation, knowledge

disability, illness, injury, age

social or political classification (such as widow, conservative, etc.)

- **Ratings in the 2 through 6 range apply to explanations in which the cause shares both internal and external elements and is an interaction between self and another person or between self and environment.**

- **Here are some examples:**

EXTERNAL	**INTERNAL**
E: I did well on the test.	E: I did well on the test.
A: because it was easy. Rating = 1.	A: because I studied hard. Rating = 7.
E: I didn't get the job.	E: I didn't get the job.
A: because they discriminate. Rating = 1.	A: because I'm a woman. Rating = 7.

IN BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

E: I'm having problems with a friend.

A: because she can't accept my perfectionism. Rating = 2 or 3.

E: We're getting a divorce.

A: we're just not compatible. Rating = 4.

E: I need surgery on my knee.

A: It's getting worse from jogging. Rating = 4.

E: I'm aphasic.

A: when I get overheated. Rating = 4.

THE STABLE-UNSTABLE DIMENSION

- **This dimension refers to the persistence in time of a cause, whether the cause of the event is chronic (stable) versus temporary (unstable).**

- **It is important to keep in mind that we are assessing the stability of the CAUSE, not the stability of the EVENT.**

- **Since many events are unique and may never happen again, rating the stability of the event will add nothing to our understanding of an individual's style of explaining events. So, we rate the stability of the cause at a point in time.**

- **Even though the stable and global dimensions overlap in reality, it is important to rate each of these two dimensions independently of each other.**

There are four interacting criteria that help to determine the rating of stability:

1. The verb tense of the cause. If the cause of the event is in the past tense, then the rating would tend to be less stable than if the cause is in the present or progressive tense.

2. The probability of future re--occurrence of the cause. A cause that is unlikely to occour again would be less stable than a cause that is like to occur again.

3. An intermittent vs. continuous cause. A cause that is intermittent, such as the weather, would be less stable than a continuous cause such as a physical trait.

4. A characterological vs. behavioral cause. Explaining an event by a character trait (e.g., I am smart, lazy decisive) is more stable than attributing an event to a behavior (e.g., I did a smart thing. I made a bad decision.)

Here are some examples:

E: I'm afraid to go out when it's dark.

A: Since I was mugged. Rating = 4.

(This cause occurred in the past, has a small probability of a future occurrence but may exert an ongoing influence on behavior.)

E: I can't restrain my appetite.

A: when I see someone else eating. Rating = 4.

(This cause occurred in the present tense, is likely to occur again and intermittent.)

E: It's difficult for me to express anger.

A: That's just the way I was raised. Rating = 5.

(This cause occurred in the past but definitely exerts an ongoing influence on behavior.)

E: I didn't get the job.

A: Because I'm a woman (or blind or intelligent, etc). Rating = 7.

(This cause is unalterable and continuous.)

THE GLOBAL-SPECIFIC DIMENSION

1. **This dimension measures the extent to which a cause affects an individual's whole life (global) or just a few areas (specific).**
2. **This dimension is often the most difficult to rate because there is rarely enough information in the extraction to indicate how widespread the effects of the cause are and what the important domains of an individual's life is.**
3. **For example, poor math abilities would have a greater effect on an accountant than a painter, quality of friendships would tend to be more important to a socially oriented person than a workaholic, and a sprained anke would have greater impact for a professional skater than a computer programmer.**
4. **In the absence of such intimate knowledge, it is useful to think of how a cause impacts the broad scope of an "average" individual's life in terms of two major categories<achievement and affiliation<each comprised of numerous subcategories.**
5. **Clearly, this is an artificial distinction and is neither exclusive not exhaustive, but it is heuristic and helps keep the rater from projecting one's own bias into the globality rating.**
6. **Achievement, for instance, would include occupational or academic success, accumulation of knowledge or skills, sense of individuality or independence, economic or social status.**
7. **Affiliation includes intimate relationships, sense of belongingness, sex, play, marital or family health.**

8. **These are just a few examples. Causes could affect just one situation, part of one category, all of one category, or all of both categories.**
9. **It is often helpful to look to the event to judge the globality of the cause, since the event is one effect in the universe of possible effects. DO NOT, however, rate only the effects mentioned in the event, since the cause may affect more than what is stated in the event.**
10. **Primarily, rate the globality of the cause and only secondarily look at the event as one of the effects of the cause.**

- **Here are some examples:**

E: I got a speeding ticket.

A: I guess the cop had to fill his quota for the day.
Rating = 1.

(This cause affects one situation.)

E: My relationships are handicapped.

A: by my fear of spontaneity. Rating = 2 or 3.

(This cause affects part of the affiliative category and possibly part of the achievement category.)

E: My body image has gotten worse.

A: since my breast was removed. Rating = 4 or 5.

(This cause affects parts of both categories.)

E: I've had to cut back on my level of activity.

A: since my heart attack. Rating = 4 or 5.

(This cause affects parts of both categories.)

E: I've lost all zest for life.

A: since my husband died. Rating = 6 or 7.

(Most of both categories are affected by this cause.)

Appendix C

Detailed Instructions for the Families

"As you know from our discussion over the phone I am here to study the ways in which the three of you work together to solve some problems that might come up in every day life. I am going to want to see Mrs. _____ work with _____(child),and to see Mr. _____ work with _____(child) (reverse order for counterbalancing) and then all three of you together. Before we do that, we need to figure out what kinds of problems are the ones that bother you the most. Therefore we're going to start with a questionnaire that all of you will all do separately. Once that is completed, you will each take turns working out some problems in the combinations I just mentioned. I will let you know who should go and when. Does anyone have any questions? "On this sheet of paper you will find two problems. I would like you to start by reading the first one out loud. Then you will find some questions about the problem. Please read those out loud as well and work together to come up with solutions or answers to the questions. Once you are both happy with the answers to all the questions after the first problem, you can move on to the second problem. You are not being timed. I want you to work together as you normally would when faced with these problems in your daily lives. I will be _____ if you have any questions about your task."

After all three complete the task and after everything is packed up, the family is debriefed. The family is thanked and asked if they have any questions or concerns about anything they just did.

Appendix D

Social Problem Solving Vignettes

Family _ _ _ _

Family Social Problem Solving

Dyad #1

Pretend that you are walking to school and you're wearing brand new sneakers. You really like your new sneakers and this is the first day you have worn them. Suddenly, you are bumped from behind by another kid. You stumble into a mud puddle and your new sneakers get muddy.

Work together to answer the following questions:

1) What do you think happened in this story?

2) Why do you think it happened?

3) How would it make you feel if it happened to you?

4) What would you do if it happened to you?

5) Do you think that would stop them from doing it next time?

Pretend that you are standing in the hallway one morning at school. As you are standing there, two kids from your class walk by. As they walk by you, the two kids look at you, whisper something to each other and they laugh.

Work together to answer the following questions:

1) What do you think happened in this story?

2) Why do you think it happened?

3) How would it make you feel if it happened to you?

4) What would you do if it happened to you?

5) Do you think that would stop them from doing it next time?

Family _ _ _ _

Family Social Problem Solving
Dyad #2

Pretend that you are on the playground. You and some other kids are having a race. Another kid is standing on the side, bouncing a basketball. The next thing you realize is that the kid has bounced the ball and it rolls under your feet, making you fall. You skin your knee and someone else wins the race.

Please work together to answer the following questions:

1) What do you think happened in this story?

2) Why do you think it happened?

3) How would it make you feel if it happened to you?

4) What would you do if it happened to you?

5) Do you think that would stop them from doing it next time?

Pretend that you are in the bathroom one day after gym. While you are in there, two other kids come in from your class and start talking to each other. You hear one of the kids invite the other one to a birthday party. The kids say there are going to be a lot of people at the party. You have not been invited to the party.

Please work together to answer the following questions:

1) What do you think happened in this story?

2) Why do you think it happened?

3) How would it make you feel if happened to you?

4) What would you do if it happened to you?

5) Do you think that would stop them from doing it next time?

Family _ _ _ _

Family Social Problem Solving
Dyad #3

Pretend that it is your first day at school. You don't know a lot of the other kids and you would like to make friends with them. You see some kids playing a game so you walk up and say "Hi" but no one answers you.

Please work together to answer the following questions:

1) What do you think happened in this story?

2) Why do you think it happened?

3) How would it make you feel if it happened to you?

4) What would you do if it happened to you?

5) Do you think that would stop them from doing it next time?

Pretend that you are walking down the hallway at school. You're carrying your books in your arm and talking to a friend. Suddenly another kid bumps you from behind. You stumble and fall and your books go flying across the floor. The other kids in the hall start laughing.

Please work together to answer the following questions:

1) What do you think happened in this story?

2) Why do you think it happened?

3) How would it make you feel if happened to you?

4) What would you do if it happened to you?

5) Do you think that would stop them from doing it next time?

Appendix E

The Inventory of Father Involvement

Inventory of Father Involvement (SF)

Now think of your experience as a father over the past twelve months. Please rate how good of a job you think you did as a father on each of the items listed below. If an item is not applicable to your situation, circle "NA" for not applicable.

		VERY POOR						EXCELLENT	
a.	attending events your children participate in (sports, school, church events).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
b.	encouraging your children to read.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
c.	providing your children's basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and health care).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
d.	praising your children for being good or doing the right thing.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
e.	giving your children's mother encouragement and emotional support.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
f.	being involved in the daily or regular routine of taking care of your children's basic needs or activities. (feeding, driving them places, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
g.	letting your children know that their mother is an important and special person.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
h.	praising your children for something they have done well.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
i.	encouraging your children to succeed in school.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
j.	being a pal or friend to your children.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
k.	accepting responsibility for the financial support of the children you have fathered.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
l.	encouraging your children to do their homework.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA

m. telling your children that you love them. .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

n. knowing where your children go and what they do with their friends. .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

o. spending time just talking with your children when they want to talk about something. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

p. cooperating with your children's mother in the rearing of your children. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

q. reading to your younger children. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

r. teaching your children to follow rules at school. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

s. encouraging your children to continue their schooling beyond high school. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

t. disciplining your children. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

u. helping your older children with their homework. ..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

v. planning for your children's future (education, training). .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

w. encouraging your children to develop their talents (music, athletics, art, etc.). .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

x. spending time with your children doing things they like to do. .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

y. encouraging your children to do their chores. .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

z. setting rules and limits for your children's behavior. .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 NA

Appendix F

The Maternal Gatekeeping Measure

Now we would like to know about housework and child care in your family
Please rate if the statement is 1= not at all like me, 2= a little like me, 3=like me, or 4= very much like me.

A. I frequently redo some household tasks that my husband has not done well.
1 2 3 4

B. It's hard too teach family members the skills necessary to do the jobs right, so I'd rather do them myself.
1 2 3 4

C. My husband doesn't really know how to do a lot of household chores, so it's easier if I do them.
1 2 3 4

D. I have higher standards than my husband for how well cared for the house should be.
1 2 3 4

E. I like being in charge when it comes to domestic responsibilities.
1 2 3 4

F. If visitors dropped in unexpectedly and my house was a mess, I would be embarrassed.
1 2 3 4

G. When my children look well groomed in public, I feel extra proud of them.
1 2 3 4

H. I know people make judgments about how good a wife/mother I am based on how well cared for my house and kids are.
1 2 3 4

I. I care about what my neighbors, extended family, and friends think about the way I perform my household tasks.
1 2 3 4

Please rate if the statement is 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4= agree, or 5=strongly agree.

J. Most women enjoy caring for their homes, and men just don't like that stuff.

1 2 3 4 5

K. For a lot of reasons, it's harder for men than for women to do housework and child care.

1 2 3 4 5